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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 000368

SIPDIS

STATE FOR PM, NEA, NEA/ARP, NEA/NGA

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TAGS: [PREL](#), [MARR](#), [KU](#), [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: U.S. DELEGATION MAKES PROGRESS ON CONTINUED
KUWAITI AIK FUEL FOR U.S. FORCES

Classified By: CDA FRANK C. URBANCIC; REASON: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[11.](#) (C) During a series of meetings on January 27, 2004, U.S. Delegation led by Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs Lincoln Bloomfield Jr. made a concerted effort to ensure continued Kuwaiti AIK fuel supplies for the foreseeable future. Bloomfield, supported by a large DOD and State contingent, briefed his interlocutors on the current state of play in Iraq. He outlined the massive rotation of U.S. troops which is currently being ramped-up and he emphasized the central role that Kuwait plays in everything the United States is trying to accomplish in Iraq.

[12.](#) (C) In his meeting with Prime Minister Sabah Al-Ahmed, Bloomfield noted that the United States could not have the successes it is having without continued Kuwaiti support. He said the U.S. understood that this was financially and administratively painful for Kuwait and that Kuwait deserved the best estimate from the United States for what future requirements would be. Bloomfield, supported by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Peter C.W. Flory, said specifically that the United States anticipated a fuel requirement of approximately 458 million gallons for 2004. While that was expensive, it was also a conservative, i.e., high, estimate which the U.S. hoped would begin to decline as greater stability and self-sufficiency in Iraq alleviates the burdens on U.S. and Coalition forces.

[13.](#) (C) The Prime Minister emphasized that Kuwait is, and wants to remain, a partner of the United States. Kuwait was proud of its new MNNA status and it was delighted that the President himself had conferred such a rare honor upon a country as small as Kuwait. Kuwait completely appreciated what the United States was doing in Iraq and it wanted to be as helpful as it could be. While he did not promise unlimited fuel supplies, the Prime Minister noted that Bloomfield and Flory would be having meetings with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense afterward, as well as with an inter-ministerial working-level group, and he said, "I am sure you will find the outcomes to be positive."

[14.](#) (C) In the meeting with Foreign Minister Dr. Mohammed Al-Sabah, which followed the Prime Minister's meeting, both Bloomfield and Flory went into much greater detail on U.S. requirements and activities in Iraq. Mohammed emphasized that Kuwait wanted to be helpful in these activities and he did not balk at the number of 458 million gallons (compared to 482 million gallons consumed in 2003). Rather, he emphasized that the U.S. needed to help the GOK in its relations with Parliament. What the Finance Minister needed was some sort of "cover" to account for the great expenses which he was making on behalf of U.S. forces. In the separate meeting which followed at the inter-ministerial level, it became clear that this "cover" was indeed the primary focus of the GOK. The representatives of the Finance, Energy and Defense Ministries took the specific 12-month projections for categories of fuels which Bloomfield, Flory and the CENTCOM team provided, and spoke of the requirement to account for the fuel allocations in a "contract" between the Finance Ministry and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. Bloomfield suggested that the Embassy, supported by CENTCOM, could provide periodic updates to these projections in the months ahead in order that the Kuwaitis might better anticipate the actual amounts required. The Kuwaiti officials were sanguine about the prospects for resolving the bureaucratic impediments to continue fuel support to the U.S., and they thanked Bloomfield for kicking-off these discussions in such a positive and productive way. Charge emphasized that the Embassy remained available to facilitate any further questions and to pass information which might be needed, and the inter-ministerial meeting took that on board.

[15.](#) (C) COMMENT: While no one has made any firm commitment to any set amount, it is clear that the GOK, which is now shut down for the next eight days for the Eid Al-Adha holidays, will not take precipitous action to turn off the fuel taps. The GOK is also looking for the best available estimates of our fuel needs that it can work within its own budgeting process. END COMMENT.

[16.](#) (U) Assistant Secretary Bloomfield has cleared this

message.

URBANCIC